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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5364
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 4127
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2529
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1641
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1061
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2216
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6345
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4535
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2557
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000781

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - AUGUST 14

Lead Story

11. The death of an indigenous Mapuche when the police evicted him and others from a private estate in southern Chile has triggered violent incidents in the Region of Araucania. Eight policemen have been injured by shotgun pellets (La Tercera, conservative, independent, 8/14).

Honduras

12. Foreign Minister Mariano Fernandez gave Washington a message from his Brazilian, Argentine, Uruguayan, and Paraguayan counterparts: Washington must take a more active role in the crisis in Honduras and in its support of the OAS to reinstate Manuel Zelaya. Fernandez met with National Security Advisor James Jones and Jose Miguel Insulza. "We spoke of how all countries in the region, from Canada to Chile, must become more active to give that support that will finally change the path we are on" (El Mercurio, conservative, influential, 8/14).

13. Foreign Minister Fernandez' agenda in Washington is intended to show support for the efforts undertaken by the OAS with regard to Honduras. In this context, Fernandez met yesterday with White House National Security Advisor James Jones. In Santiago, there is concern that Micheletti's attempt to stop OAS Secretary General Insulza from joining the delegation due to travel to Honduras soon, would find support with the USG (La Tercera, 8/14).

14. Minister Fernandez said, "support for a prompt solution" to the crisis in Honduras must have "greater political visibility." Fernandez will meet today with Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Thomas Shannon and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere Craig Kelly (La Nacion, government-owned, 8/14).

President Zelaya in Chile

15. President Manuel Zelaya had lunch in La Moneda with President Bachelet and party presidents. Right-wing Renovacion Nacional (RN) did not attend, because it "disagreed meeting with a president who is questioned by his own country's Supreme Court." At the lunch, Zelaya said that "things would be different" if the Obama administration were more involved, adding that the U.S. stance against the Micheletti government has been "soft." Meanwhile, Micheletti said that OAS Secretary General Insulza "is not welcome" (El Mercurio, 8/14).

¶16. In La Moneda, President Zelaya received expressions of support from both government-coalition and opposition congressmen (La Tercera, 8/14).

¶17. After his lunch at La Moneda, Zelaya visited the University of Chile to speak on democracy in Latin America, invited by the university's Student Federation (La Nacion, 8/14).

U.S.-Related News

¶18. General Electric will open a plant in the Fifth Region to design, produce, and export software. The company will offer 1,000 job openings for local professionals and technicians. The project includes training the locally hired personnel in India and establishing alliances with local technological institutes and universities to adapt their courses to suit GE's specific needs. Applicants must speak English (Popular Las Ultimas Noticias, La Nacion, and financial daily Diario Financiero, 8/14).

Indigenous Mapuche Conflict

¶19. President Bachelet instructed a government delegation to visit the area of the indigenous Mapuche conflict to assess the state of the commitments acquired by the government and resolve situations that have been postponed. "Nothing justifies violence in the (Region of) Araucania. It must be understood that the only road to solving the legitimate historical demands of the Mapuche people is through dialogue. Without that dialogue there can be no progress," said Bachelet (El Mercurio, 8/14).

¶110. Bachelet underscored that Concertacion administrations (in office since 1989) have given Mapuche communities 650,000 hectares of land and that another 115 communities will receive land in the next seven months. Government spokesperson Carolina Toha insisted, "Today the government's policy is to recognize and value indigenous cultures and resolve their historical social demands, but in a context of co-existence and respect" (El Mercurio, 8/14).

¶111. Yesterday, a series of incidents occurred at different times in the area of the Mapuche conflict: Hooded individuals carrying firearms set up barricades and blocked Route 5 for hours. Another group blocked the road between Canete and Tirua and at gunpoint demanded a "toll" for the Mapuche cause and opened fire on the police as they escaped. In Ercilla, hooded individuals set fire to 40 farming machines and burned wheat and oatmeal storehouses. About 30 hooded individuals entered a private estate in Ercilla and opened fire on the workers, the owner, and the policemen guarding the place per court instructions (El Mercurio, 8/14).

¶112. Trucker, farmer, and business unions showed their support to the chief of police responsible for the Region of Araucania. They said the Mapuche attacks are a form of "permanent terrorism" (El Mercurio, 8/14.)

¶113. With regard to the death of Juan Collio, indigenous leaders said the police immediately fired weapons and threw tear gas and did not even attempt to dialogue with the Mapuches. The chief of police of the Region of Araucania, Cristian Llevenes, said the opposite. "This happened when individuals carrying rifles and shotguns began shooting," adding that the policeman allegedly responsible for Collio's death acted in self-defense and that proof of that is that his helmet and bullet-proof vest are covered with shotgun pellets (El Mercurio, 8/14).

¶114. National Prosecutor Sabas Chauan: "It is every citizen's right to repel an attack." Undersecretary of Interior Patricio Rosende: "We would have a dead policeman had he not been using protective equipment." Mapuche leader Jose Naim: "They (the police) said they were ambushed and that is not true" (El Mercurio, 8/14).

SIMONS